

Standard 8-3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the American Civil War—its causes and effects and the major events that occurred during that time.

8-3.3 Draw conclusions about how sectionalism arose from events or circumstances of racial tension, internal population shifts, and political conflicts, including the Denmark Vesey plot, slave codes, and the African American population majority. (H, P, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In the 3rd grade, students compared the conditions of daily life for various classes of people in South Carolina, including the elite, the middle class, the lower class, the independent farmers, and the free and the enslaved African Americans (3-4.1). Students summarized the institution of slavery prior to the Civil War, including reference to conditions in South Carolina, the invention of the cotton gin, subsequent expansion of slavery, and economic dependence on slavery (3-4.2).

In the 4th grade, students explained the effects of the American Revolution on African Americans and Native Americans, including how the war affected attitudes about slavery and contributed to the inclusion of abolition in early state constitutions (4-3.7).

In 11th grade United States history, students will compare the social and cultural characteristics of the North, the South, and the West during the antebellum period, including the lives of African Americans and social reform movements such as abolition and women's rights (USHC-4.1). Students will explain how the political events and issues that divided the nation led to the Civil War, including the compromises reached to maintain the balance of free and slave states, the successes and failures of the abolitionist movement, the conflicting views on states' rights and federal authority, the emergence of the Republican Party and its win in 1860, and the formation of the Confederate States of America (USHC 4.2).

It is essential for students to know how to

Sectionalism is loyalty to a particular region or section of a country instead of to the nation as a whole. Sectionalism developed in the period after the ratification of the Constitution as the economies, cultures and political interests of the North and the South became more and more different. Ideas from this indicator should be taught at the same time as 8-3.2.

Sectional differences first developed in the colonial period as a result of the different geographies of the regions. The North developed as a trading region of small farms and the South developed the plantation system. Although all regions had slavery prior to the American Revolution, after the war was over, Northern states passed laws to gradually emancipate their slaves. In the South, the invention of the cotton gin led the South to become even more economically dependent upon slave labor.

Although both Northerners and Southerners supported the ratification of the Constitution, the different interests of the regions helped to create the two-party system. Southerners tended to be Democratic-Republican followers of Thomas Jefferson who called themselves Republicans. New Englanders tended to be Federalists (and later Whigs). [It is important not to confuse the Jeffersonian Republicans with the Republicans of Lincoln. Jefferson's Republicans became Jackson's Democrats. Lincoln Republicans are the ideological descendants of the Federalists.] The political parties and the regions took different positions on the issues of the day. South Carolinians opposed the high tariff in the nullification crisis of the 1830s.

Tension also arose as a result of the growing abolitionist movement. Southerners feared the impact of abolitionist thought on the slave system and consequently sought to stifle propaganda. However, they

could not keep abolitionists from reaching a larger and larger Northern audience and convincing them of the evils of the ‘peculiar institution.’ Southerners responded in anger to abolitionists’ criticism, claiming that slavery was a ‘positive good,’ because it cared for workers throughout their lives.

Sectionalism was further intensified by disagreements over the expansion of slavery into the territories. This even split the political parties. Democrats, for example, split into northern and southern factions over the issue of slave labor in the West and, as time passed, the Missouri Compromise, Texas Annexation, the Compromise of 1850 that included the Fugitive Slave Act, the Kansas Nebraska Act, and the *Dred Scott* decision showed the escalating tensions between the regions (8-3.2). Both Southerners and Northerners were less and less willing to compromise on the issue of expansion of slavery into the territories.

Sectionalism was furthered by changes in the Northern economy to industry that led to population shifts. Industry attracted European immigrants to jobs and allowed the North to have a larger representation in the House of Representatives. The South did not attract immigrants in large numbers. Instead, the population of the South was growing because of the natural increase of the slave population. Although the international slave trade was outlawed in 1808, the numbers of slaves grew due to higher birth rates and smuggling. In South Carolina, by the 1720’s, the black population surpassed the white population and there was an African American majority in most Southern states.

Sectionalism was intensified as a result of the growing slave population in the South. The **Denmark Vesey plot** caused Southerners to become even more fearful of their slaves. **Slave codes** that had been developed as a result of the Stono rebellion during colonial times were strengthened to better protect white society. The General Assembly passed laws that prohibited slaves from meeting, learning to read and write and that regulated all aspects of slaves’ lives. Southerners feared that if slavery could not expand into the territories eventually the national government would be in the hands of the North. Slavery would be outlawed and Southerners would have among them a large African American population that they could not control.

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to know specific numbers regarding population, but it is important for them to understand that fear of African American majorities was a factor in the passage of many laws. Although a general characterization of political party ideology is helpful, it is far more important that students know that the parties were divided along north/south issues.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments require students to **draw conclusions** about how sectionalism arose from events or circumstances. Assessments should require that students **explain** how each event led to increased sectionalism. Students should be able to **explain** how internal population shifts, and political conflicts, including the Denmark Vesey plot, slave codes, and the African American population majority demonstrated tensions between the races and increased tension between the sections.